AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace paragraph [0011] with the following amended paragraph:

[0011] This object is achieved by means of the belted absorbent article comprising an absorbent structure extending about a first longitudinal axis, the absorbent structure including a topsheet, a backsheet and an absorbent batt disposed between the topsheet and the backsheet, the absorbent structure having a transverse axis dividing the absorbent structure into a front panel terminating in a front end region and a rear panel terminating in a rear end region, the absorbent structure being delimited by opposed longitudinal edges and opposed transverse edges, and a pair of opposed belt halves attached to the absorbent structure at the rear end region of the rear panel by a respective joint, each belt half extending about a second longitudinal axis such that each belt half extends outwardly from a respective longitudinal edge of the absorbent structure. The joint between each belt half and the absorbent structure is designed such that when each belt half is subjected to a tension force of 35 N acting along the second longitudinal axis and the second longitudinal axis creates an angle α to said transverse axis of said absorbent structure, the following minimum average release times (t) of each said belt half from said absorbent structure are attained:

when α = 10°, t **[[≫]]** ≧720 seconds;

when α = 20°, t **[[≫]]** ≧330 seconds;

when α = 25°, t **[[≫]]** ≧240 seconds;

when α = 30°, t **[[≫]]** ≧180 seconds; and

when α = 40°, t **[[≫]]** ≧75 seconds.

Please replace paragraph [0012] with the following amended paragraph:

[0012] In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the following minimum average release times (t) of each belt half from the absorbent structure are attained:

when α = 10°, t **[[>]]** ≥740 seconds;
when α = 20°, t **[[>]]** ≥340 seconds;
when α = 25°, t **[[>]]** ≥245 seconds;
when α = 30°, t **[[>]]** ≥190 seconds; and
when α = 40°, t **[[>]]** ≥80 seconds.

Please replace paragraph [0013] with the following amended paragraph:

[0013] In a more preferred embodiment of the invention, the following minimum average release times (t) of each belt half from the absorbent structure are attained:

when α = 10°, t **[[>]]** ≥760 seconds;
when α = 20°, t **[[>]]** ≥350 seconds;
when α = 25°, t **[[>]]** ≥250 seconds;
when α = 30°, t **[[>]]** ≥200 seconds; and
when α = 40°, t **[[>]]** ≥85 seconds.

Please replace paragraph [0014] with the following amended paragraph:

[0014] In a further embodiment of the invention, the following minimum average release times (t) of each belt half from the absorbent structure are attained:

when α = 10°, t **[[≫]]** ≥780 seconds;

when α = 20°, t **[[≫]]** ≥360 seconds;

when α = 25°, t **[[≫]]** ≥255 seconds;

when α = 30°, t **[[≫]]** ≥210 seconds; and

when α = 40°, t **[[≫]]** ≥90 seconds.

Please replace paragraph [0015] with the following amended paragraph:

[0015] In accordance with a most preferred embodiment of the invention, the following minimum average release times (t) of each belt half from the absorbent structure are attained:

when α = 10°, t **[[≫]]** ≥800 seconds;

when α = 20°, t **[[≫]]** ≥370 seconds;

when α = 25°, t **[[≫]]** ≥260 seconds;

when α = 30°, t **[[≫]]** ≥220 seconds; and

when α = 40°, t **[[≫]]** ≥100 seconds.

Please replace paragraph [0042] with the following amended paragraph:

[0042] In accordance with the present invention, the joint 50 is designed to meet certain minimum requirements. The present inventors have discovered that, for the absorbent article to function satisfactorily, the joint 50 should be capable of withstanding a certain tension force applied to the belt halves at a certain angle α to the transverse axis of the absorbent structure for a certain minimum period of time. Thus, and in a manner which will be explained in greater detail below, the joint is subjected to a test procedure such that, and as illustrated in

Fig. 4, a portion of the absorbent structure 16 is secured to a test rig, generally denoted reference numeral 60, and a load of 35 N is applied to the belt half 14 while the belt half external of the absorbent structure 16 is maintained at a predetermined angle α to the transverse axis of the absorbent structure. The time up to failure of the joint, i.e. when the belt half completely dissociates from the absorbent structure, is measured. The time to failure is hereinafter referred to as the release time of the joint. In accordance with the present invention, the minimum average release times of the joint should be:

when α = 10°, t **[[>]]** ≥720 seconds;
when α = 20°, t **[[>]]** ≥330 seconds;
when α = 25°, t **[[>]]** ≥240 seconds;
when α = 30°, t **[[>]]** ≥180 seconds; and
when α = 40°, t **[[>]]** ≥75 seconds.

Please replace paragraph [0043] with the following amended paragraph:

[0043] In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the following minimum average release times (t) of each belt half from the absorbent structure are attained:

when α = 10°, t **[[>]]** ≥740 seconds;
when α = 20°, t **[[>]]** ≥340 seconds;
when α = 25°, t **[[>]]** ≥245 seconds;
when α = 30°, t **[[>]]** ≥190 seconds; and
when α = 40°, t **[[>]]** ≥80 seconds.

Please replace paragraph [0044] with the following amended paragraph:

[0044] In a more preferred embodiment of the invention, the following minimum average release times (t) of each belt half from the absorbent structure are attained:

when α = 10°, t **[[≫]]** ≥760 seconds;

when α = 20°, t **[[≫]]** ≥350 seconds;

when α = 25°, t **[[≫]]** ≥250 seconds;

when α = 30°, t **[[≫]]** ≥200 seconds; and

when α = 40°, t **[[≫]]** ≥85 seconds.

Please replace paragraph [0045] with the following amended paragraph:

[0045] In a further embodiment of the invention, the following minimum average release times (t) of each belt half from the absorbent structure are attained:

when α = 10°, t **[[≫]]** ≥780 seconds;

when α = 20°, t **[[≫]]** ≥360 seconds;

when α = 25°, t **[[≫]]** ≥255 seconds;

when α = 30°, t **[[≫]]** ≥210 seconds; and

when α = 40°, t **[[≫]]** ≥90 seconds.

Please replace paragraph [0046] with the following amended paragraph:

[0046] In accordance with a most preferred embodiment of the invention, the following minimum average release times (t) of each belt half from the absorbent structure are attained:

when α = 10°, t **[[≫]]** ≥800 seconds;

when α = 20°, t **[[≫]]** ≥370 seconds;

when α = 25°, t **[[≫]]** ≥260 seconds;

when α = 30°, t **[[≫]]** ≥220 seconds; and

when α = 40°, t **[[≫]]** ≥100 seconds.

Please replace paragraph [0057] with the following amended paragraph:

[0057] Thus, the average release times for the joint of the EXAMPLE are:

when α = 10°, t **[[≫]]** =741 seconds;
when α = 20°, t **[[≫]]** =344 seconds;
when α = 25°, t **[[≫]]** =249 seconds;
when α = 30°, t **[[≫]]** =201 seconds; and
when α = 40°, t **[[≫]]** =81 seconds.